IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A surgical instrument for treating female urinary incontinence, the instrument comprising:

a) a handle;

b) a shaft extending in a distal direction from the handle and comprising a curved portion, the shaft being adapted to access interior tissue within a human body;

c) a blunt tip disposed at a distal end of the shaft for blunt dissection of tissue; and

d) a window including an L-shaped slot located within a distal end portion of the shaft, the L-shaped slot including a first leg extending radially inward and a second leg extending axially in a distal direction from an inner end of the first leg.

2. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted to transvaginally access interior tissue within a female human body.

3. (cancelled)

4. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein a suture or a sling ~~maybe~~ may be introduced into the window and retained by the window.

5. (cancelled)

6. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the handle comprises a friction based gripping surface.

7. (previously presented) A device for deploying an implant within a human body, the device comprising:

a body member including

(a) a connector adapted to attach onto an instrument;

(b) a retainer coupled to the connector for holding the implant;

(c) a shield located adjacent to and spaced apart from the retainer and at a distal end of the device for shielding the implant from surrounding tissue during insertion of the device into a human body; and

(d) a pair of proximal tabs located adjacent to and spaced apart from the shield, the pair of proximal tabs being adapted to undo the shielding mechanism so as to expose the implant and disengage the implant from the device, thereby allowing the implant to engage into surrounding tissue.

8. (original) The device of claim 7, wherein the implant is a surgical hook having a suture attached thereto, and the shielding mechanism protects a tip of the surgical hook during insertion of the surgical hook into the human body.

9. (original) The device of claim 7, wherein the retainer holds the implant to the body member by a friction fit.

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1 comprising an element for covering the window.

12. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 11 comprising an actuator for operating the element, the element being movable between an open position, an intermediate position, and a closed position.

13. (currently amended) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein

a suture or a sling ~~maybe~~ may be introduced into the window when the element is ~~in~~ placed in the open position,

a suture or a sling may be retained by the window when the element is placed in the intermediate position, and

a suture or a sling may be released from the window when the element is placed in the closed position.

14. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein the actuator comprises a knob located on the handle.

15. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein the element comprises a cutting edge.

16. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 15, wherein
a suture or a sling may be introduced into the window when the element is placed in the open position,
a suture or a sling may be retained by the window when the element is placed in the intermediate position, and
a suture or a sling may be cut by the cutting edge when the element is placed in the closed position.

17. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted for percutaneous access through an incision in the abdominal wall.

18. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted to place an implant introduced through a vaginal incision.

19. (new) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the first leg and the second leg form an angle of about 90 degrees.